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ABSTRACT

Part 1 of this five-part project invites students of the Tasmanian region of Australia to explore the history of Port Arthur, a 19th century penal colony located in Tasmania. The project is based on three ideas: (1) studying history can be educational and enjoyable; (2) imagination is an essential part of studying history; and (3) history is most of all a means by which to seek to understand the present--one's self and society as it exists now. Part 1 of the project contains six sections: (1) introducing "Port Arthur Alive"; (2) getting started on imaginative role play; (3) simple drama structures; (4) building stories from opposite concepts; (5) visiting Port Arthur; and (6) further reading and historical sources. (DB)

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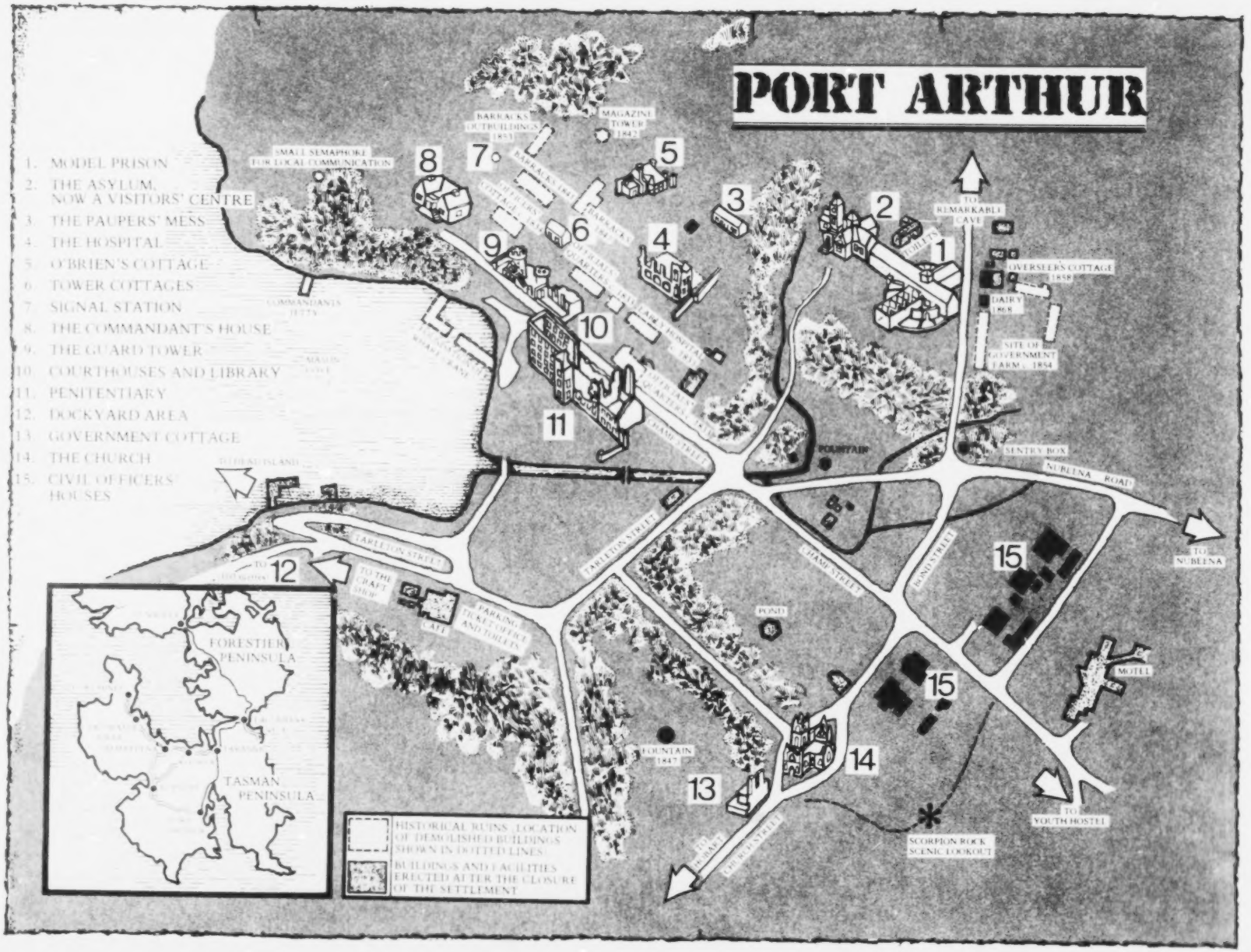
1 GETTING STARTED


PORT ARTHUR
1. MODEL PRISON
2. THE ASYLUM, NOW A VISITORS' CENTRE
3. THE PAUPERS' MESS
4. THE HOSPITAL
5. O'BRIEN'S COTTAGE
6. TOWER COTTAGES
7. SIGNAL STATION
8. THE COMMANDANT'S HOUSE
9. THE GUARD TOWER
10. COURTHOUSES AND LIBRARY
11. PENITENTIARY
12. DOCKYARD AREA
13. GOVERNMENT COTTAGE
14. THE CHURCH
15. CIVIL OFFICERS' HOUSES
BARRACKS (8 BUILDINGS) 1853
MAGAZINE TOWER 1842
SMALL SEMAPHORE FOR LOCAL COMMUNICATION
COMMANDANT'S JETTY
MASON'S COVE
TO REMARKABLE CAVE
TOILETS
OVERSEER'S COTTAGE 1858
DAIRY 1858
SITE OF GOVERNMENT FARM c. 1854
FOUNTAIN
SENTRY BOX
NUBEENA ROAD
TO NUBEENA
TARLETON STREET
TO THE CRAFT SHOP
CAFE
PARKING, TICKET OFFICE AND TOILETS
GRAHAM STREET
BAND STREET
POND
MOTEL
FOUNTAIN 1847
TO JETTY
THE BROADSTREET
SCORPION ROCK SCENIC LOOKOUT
TO YOUTH HOSTEL
FORESTIER PENINSULA
TASMAN PENINSULA
HISTORICAL RUINS (LOCATION OF DEMOLISHED BUILDINGS SHOWN IN DOTTED LINES)
BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES ERECTED AFTER THE CLOSURE OF THE SETTLEMENT

PORT ARTHUR ALIVE

EXPLORING PAST AND PRESENT

1 GETTING STARTED

A JOINT PROJECT OF THE NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
AND THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF TASMANIA

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to thank the children, teachers and parents of Springfield Gardens Primary School, whose visit to Port Arthur was photographed by Denis Bell. Thanks, too, to the students of Kingston Primary School and to other children whose work appears in this book.

We also thank the following organisations for permission to reproduce photos and prints:
Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, Hobart—cover, detail from photo of Port Arthur guards by Alfred Bock, c1860; p. 38, detail from watercolour painting of the church at Port Arthur, c1860.
Maritime MuseumTasmania—p. 35, photo by J.C. Harrison, c1912.
Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery—p. 4, Port Arthur Sketch; p. 30, View from the North of Bay, Port Arthur.

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Education Department, Tasmania, Australia

Making *Port Arthur Alive*

Port Arthur Alive is a joint publication of the Port Arthur Conservation and Development Project (National Parks and Wildlife Service) and the Education Department of Tasmania. Its creation involved the efforts of many people.

The production of *Port Arthur Alive* was co-ordinated by Peter Boyer, Interpretation Officer, Port Arthur Conservation and Development Project (PACDP). The idea for this material emerged from the discussions of a seminar group at Port Arthur in August 1983. The seminar involved staff from Curriculum Services units of the Education Department, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Tasman District High School. A working group consisting of Pamela Balon and Ian Cordwell (Tasman District High School teachers and, later, Port Arthur education officers) and Peter Boyer discussed means of increasing students' involvement with Port Arthur history. *Port Arthur Alive* grew out of the discussions of this working group.

Doug Munro (PACDP historian), Peter Boyer, Irene Schaffer and Peter MacFie (PACDP historian) were responsible for researching the historical material in *Port Arthur Alive*.

Notes on role-play were written by Megan Shaffner (then a speech and drama consultant with the Education Department), who was supported by discussions involving Ida McCann and Elizabeth Darvell (also then speech and drama consultants), Pamela Balon, Ian Cordwell, Kristal Buckley (technical officer, PACDP) and Peter Boyer. The introduction, background notes, eyewitness accounts and profiles were written by Peter Boyer. Profile 34 (Edward Murphy) was based on research and biographical notes by Irene Schaffer.

Geoff Lennox, education officer with National Parks and Wildlife Service, provided additional historical advice.

The following persons gave practical advice and helped trial the material: Pamela Balon, Ian Cordwell and Kristal Buckley; speech and drama consultants of the Education Department; Grant Stebbings and Carol Wilson (Herdsmans Cove Primary School); David McLaughlin (Molesworth Primary School); John Laing (Orford Primary School); Peter Lelong (St Cuthbert's Primary School, Lindisfarne); Charles Allardice (Hobart Matriculation College); Jo-Ellen Bird (Salamanca Theatre Company); and the teachers and schools participating in the Port Arthur Education Program and its seminars.

The *Port Arthur Alive* working group wishes to acknowledge the contribution of the following people (in no particular order): Warren Brewer, John Annells and other staff of the Curriculum Development and Evaluation Section of the Education Department, for organising the seminars that set the Port Arthur Education Program in motion; Kristal Buckley and other staff of the Port Arthur Project for their interest and constructive comments; Norma

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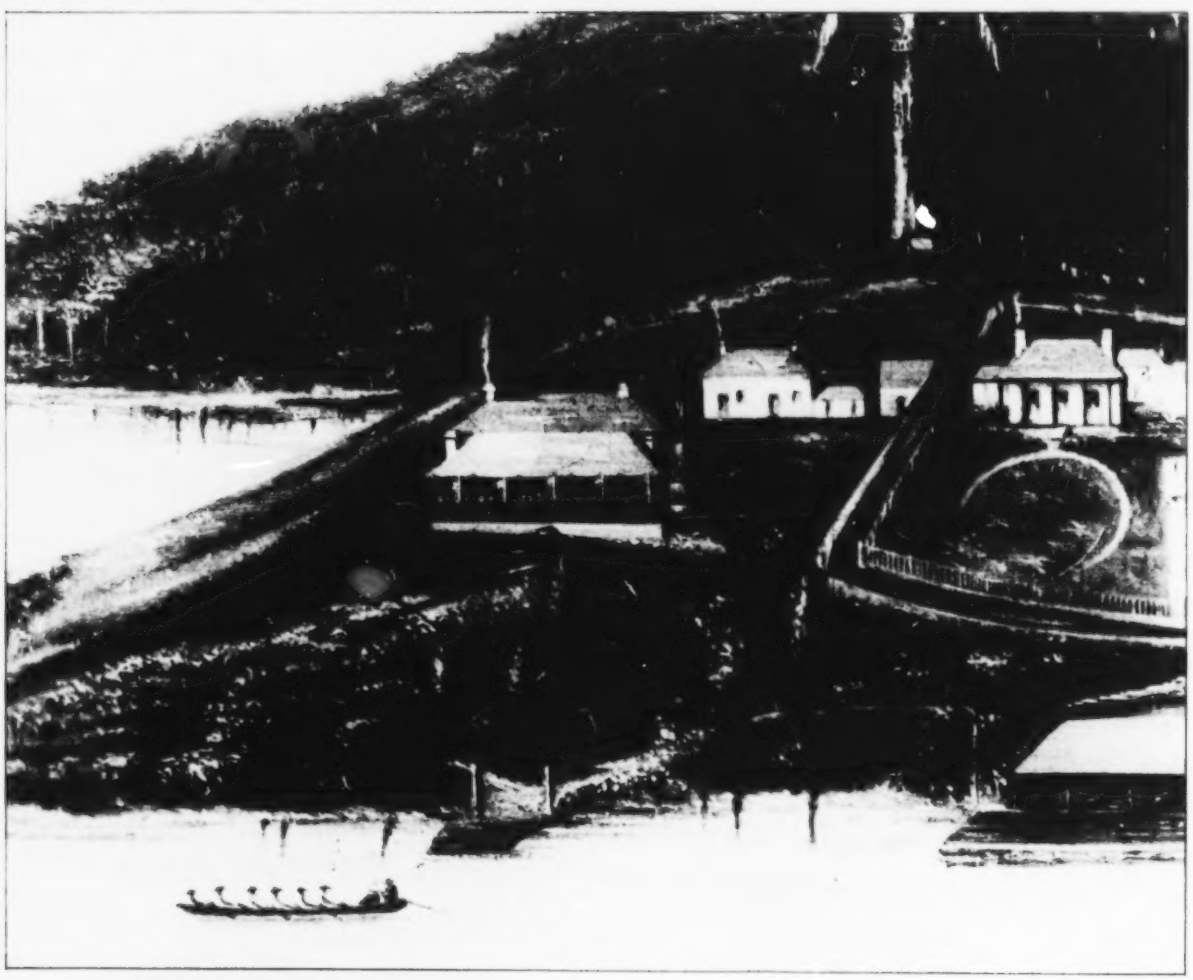
Youd (principal) and the staff of Tasman District High School for their support; Guy Deakin, Curriculum Resources Section of the Education Department, for his energy and expertise in preparing the trial materials; Carol Boulanger, also from the Curriculum Resources Section, for editing the material and supervising production; Carol Sowby for design and layout of the materials; Elaine McKay, senior lecturer at the Centre for Education, University of Tasmania, for her incisive comments; and Grant Stebbings, Carol Wilson and their classes at Herdsmans Cove Primary School, for an unforgettable demonstration of the power of drama in the study of history.

A particular debt is owed to Megan Schaffner (who wrote most of Parts 1 and 2), Ida McCann and Elizabeth Darvell, for their enthusiastic support and many hours spent in discussion and expert guidance.



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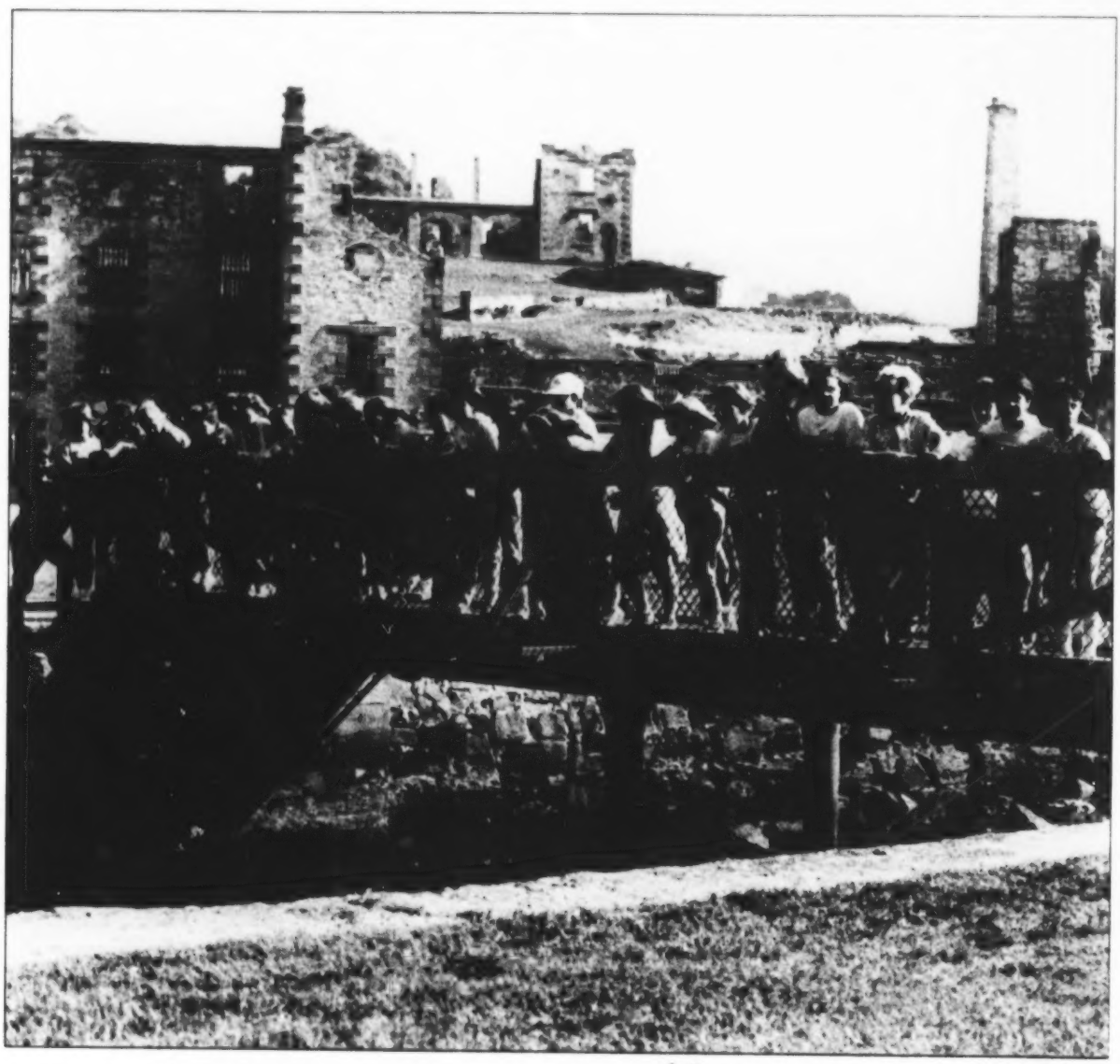

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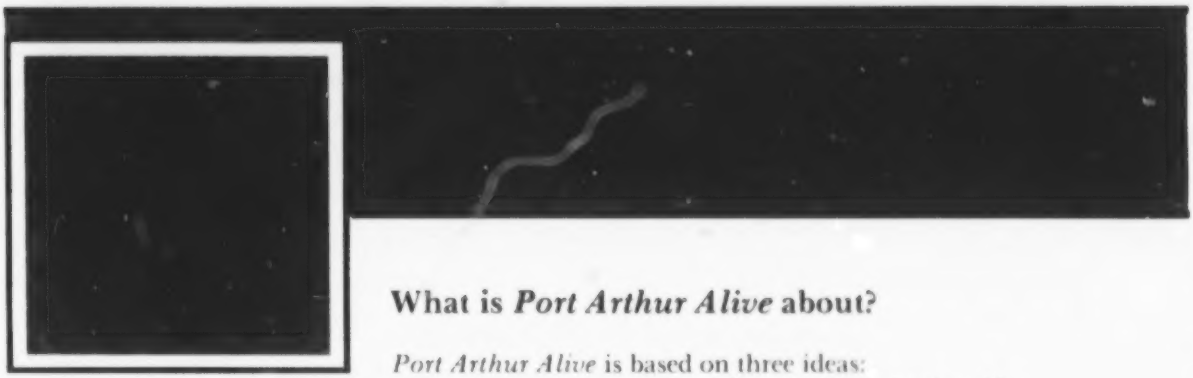


What is *Port Arthur Alive* about?

Port Arthur Alive is based on three ideas:

- Studying history can be educational and enjoyable.
- Imagination is an essential part of studying history.
- History is most of all a means by which we seek to understand the present—ourselves and our society as we are now.

Port Arthur Alive includes five books of complementary material:

Part 1: *Getting Started*—an introduction to role-play, with ideas for activities.
Part 2: *Extended Activities*—more advanced role-play ideas and activities.
Part 3: *Background*—notes about transportation, crime and punishment and the Port Arthur penal settlement.
Part 4: *Eyewitness*—quotes, records, stories in their own words by people who were at Port Arthur in its early days.
Part 5: *Profiles*—stories of 35 people who lived on Tasman Peninsula during Port Arthur's early years.

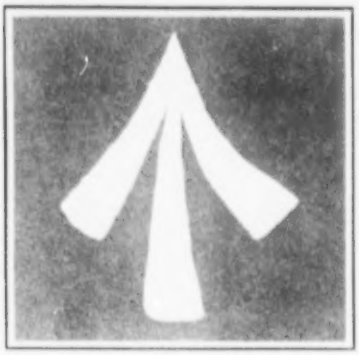
Before you wade in to *Port Arthur Alive*, a word of advice: don't be put off by the number of pages. Don't feel you have to read everything. Browse selectively, if you want to, choosing ideas you like and following their development. But get the general flavour before going into any detail.

Port Arthur Alive doesn't have to be read from cover to cover. You can pick and choose according to your needs: it is an open resource that you can use in any way you like. One important way of using the material is as the basis for role-play, and that is what the first two parts are mainly concerned with.

History and imagination

History is about ourselves. Our past—whether it is what we did last month or what our ancestors did a thousand years ago—has made us into what we are now. In becoming involved in history we are learning to understand ourselves, both as individuals and in society.

History is most of all a tool for understanding the present, to be used as and when our present condition dictates. It makes sense to us only when we turn to it naturally out of some clear, present need. It begins to work for us only when we can feel it touching our own lives, helping us to deal with such things as our sense of identity, our self-fulfilment, our place in the universe, and so on. It follows that in teaching history we need always to see the whole: to link past with present, general with personal, so that each child can see history as belonging to him or her, personally.



History is about people. It is not something detached or lifeless, nor something that can be measured. The facts, data, records and statistics by themselves are worthless. The important thing is understanding the people whose lives created the records—and understanding, too, the limitations of the records. History isn't just about people who write or people who are written about. It is about everyone, and we frequently need to go beyond the records to begin to comprehend the fullness of it all.

That is where imagination comes in. History has traditionally been taught as a list of **Things Important:** facts, dates, events, leaders. Because these things are remote from us they mean nothing to us, so we tend to cast such history aside and tackle more 'relevant' things. In this kind of history teaching we are denied the chance to identify with people, because the essential tool, imagination, is avoided or rejected. Imagination, we are told, has more to do with fiction (thought to be about 'untrue' things) than with history ('true' things).

But the ability to imagine is essential in the study and teaching of history.

Port Arthur Alive seeks most of all to encourage teachers and students to use historical evidence not just to look at the past but also, through our imaginations, to **experience** it. Since history is about people, we want to share their joys and sorrows, their fears and doubts, and their motives, as they experienced them then. It is only with such personal involvement that history will begin to work for us, enlarging our lives and helping us to understand ourselves as we are now.

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History as stories—a natural framework

History began as story-telling. It linked two things: people's natural desire to hear a good story, and an equally natural desire to know what happened in times past. History in story-form was encouraging to people because it was within a clearly understood framework; it contained some sort of challenge to reason and imagination; it provided a satisfying resolution; and it joined its parts together with a thread of meaning.

Meaning in this sense is something very private and personal. As we said before, history (and just about everything else, too) makes sense only when we can relate to it personally. A teacher does not teach meaning; rather, a student finds it in his or her own way. As teachers of history we need to present past lives and events in a way that will maximise students' chances of achieving this sense of individual, personal discovery, that will keep options open and not prematurely close them off in preconceived compartments.

One way of making children's education more engaging—of allowing the meaning to come through—has been formulated by the educational philosopher Kieran Egan. He encourages the teacher to 'think of the lesson or unit as a good story to be told rather than as a set of objectives to be achieved and evaluated'. The story form, he has said, is 'a reflection of some fundamental mental structure . . . a basic intellectual tool we use in making sense of the world and experience'. 'Story-form' does not mean just a fictional story, but 'the underlying form, or plot, which gives stories their power'. This form, Egan says, 'can be used on any material, fictional or factual, in order to provide better access to its meaning'.

The procedure suggested by Egan for developing a story-form is basically simple. Given a certain topic to work with (let's say, 'A convict's existence at Port Arthur'), we begin by **identifying the importance** of that topic, asking ourselves such questions as: 'What is most important about this topic?','Why does it matter?', and 'What about it will touch the students' feelings?' In examining the last question we will find ourselves looking for 'the story', just as to

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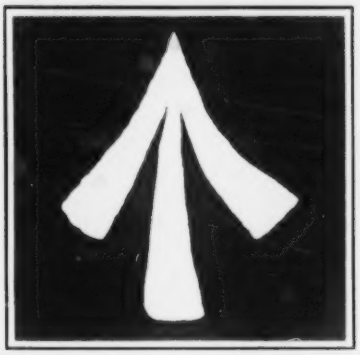

a journalist, all news is 'a good story'. And in looking for the story, our attention will be drawn to—and can be focused by—**opposites**.

The most prominent element in the sorts of stories children find engaging, Egan found, is that of opposites: good/bad, brave/cowardly, big/little, alive/dead, love/hate, fear/security and so on. Applying the same thinking to the history of penal Port Arthur, we might come up with such opposing concepts as confinement/freedom, hope/despair, obedience/disobedience and many more, as the list of words in Section 4 of this book suggests.

The next step, the **selection of opposites**, which will provide the essence of the story, is important. The opposites chosen need to be close to the heart of the topic. In the case of 'a convict's existence', the opposing pair, confinement/freedom, would seem to cover much of what it was to be a convict.

Then comes the **content**, that will fill out the story, establishing it firmly in place and time, giving it human elements, and so on. We need to ask: 'What content, what kind of material, person, occurrence, expresses the opposites we have chosen most vividly, clearly and dramatically, and helps most effectively to form the topic into a story?' Again taking the convict example, we may choose from the historical material of *Port Arthur Alive* one or more convict profiles, the profile of a figure of authority, and/or an account of a convict's escape and recapture (from *Eyewitness*), keeping in mind how confinement/freedom affected convicts' lives and what confinement/freedom meant to them. In the subsequent story-building activity involving both teacher and students, this theme becomes a controlling principle determining what is to be included or excluded from the story.

The whole thrust of the *Port Arthur Alive* material is toward making stories in some form or other. Some teachers may need no more guidance than this, and will explore their own ways. Others may want to examine Egan's ideas in more detail, with a view to directly implementing them in the class. For these teachers, Section 4 contains some practical guidelines, as well as a list of concepts to do with Port Arthur's history which may help to organise thinking along these lines.

Some basic assumptions

The ideas and activities of *Port Arthur Alive* are based on the following assumptions:

1. The process, the working out, is the important thing, not the end product.

2. Children must participate fully in the learning: their knowledge and statements are to be highly valued, and should be allowed to help provide the direction in which the lesson or discussion will lead.

3. At the same time, you as teacher need to have a purpose, a clear idea of what you hope to achieve, and a base plan of action. The imaginative activities suggested by *Port Arthur Alive*, although they should be enjoyable, are serious educational exercises requiring your full commitment.

4. The development of dramatic ideas is a slow process requiring patience and consideration. The process should be halted whenever necessary, to allow time for everyone to gather thoughts and reflect.

5. The major goal should be for children to acquire personal, inner knowledge that relates to their lives, rather than fixed answers to stated questions. Children should feel personally involved with the historical person and/or situation they are studying.

6. Non-verbal communication—gesture, facial expression, suggestion through minimal costume or props—has a place.

7. Children as a general rule should not be set one against a group; where a single antagonist is needed it is better that you, the teacher, take on this role. Emphasis should be on group discussion, interaction and co-operation. (This doesn't mean that you should avoid exploring conflict, just that you should be careful about how you do it.)

8. As long as you retain the general historical feeling, you need not feel guilty about making small imaginative adjustments to the factual record to bring characters or situations together in rounding off a picture or theme. But this should be a conscious, controlled exercise, not an open season on historical facts.

9. If conditions at your school allow, you should explore the possibilities of team-teaching and extended teaching time. Team-teaching—two teachers working together or one teacher working with a volunteer parent—is a situation with many advantages in starting and stopping discussion or drama; it also enables the partners to bounce ideas off each other.

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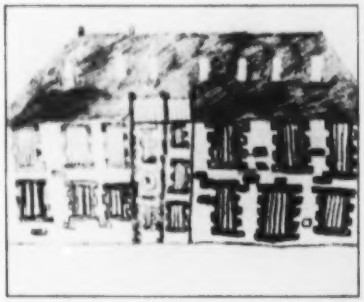
Port Arthur Alive contains a great deal of historical raw material that you can use in a variety of imaginative role-play activities. These activities are aimed at:

- **acquiring information** about people and events of the past;
- **exploring from the 'inside'** the attitudes and feelings of people of earlier times;
- **developing interest in students' own past**—the history of their own immediate environment;
- **relating the past to the present**—noting the things about the past which enlarge our views of the present.



Before attempting in-role activities that relate to a past age, it is wise to get the students used to the idea of role-taking and of accepting you, their teacher, in other roles.

Introducing role-play

These simple, brief activities are designed to help the students to develop positive attitudes towards role-playing and to learn that drama is about:

- co-operating with others, not competing against them;
- picking up clues and responding appropriately;
- building believable, consistent and realistic roles;
- the **meaning** of events.

Picking up clues

The teacher introduces the idea that this place (the classroom) can become any number of different places for drama. You might then tell the students (sitting or standing in a circle) that in a moment you will pretend to be someone else and that they are to pick up the clues you give them (for example, what you say and do) in order to decide:

- who you are;
- who they are;
- where they are.

The teacher then selects two or three situations and works through them with the group. Each would last only one or two minutes. Examples might include:

1. You enter and mime taking off your pack. You say: 'You got here quickly. Just look at the view! Anyone put the billy on yet? I could do with a drink!'

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You stop the activity and ask:

- Where are we?
- Who might we be?
- What clues did you pick up—from what I said—from what I did?

2. You enter, look round, and say: 'I didn't know there'd be so many of you! The boss will be along later. Any of you worked on an orchard before?'

You then ask direct questions of various students who will probably pick up the idea that they are in role as workers applying for jobs on an orchard.

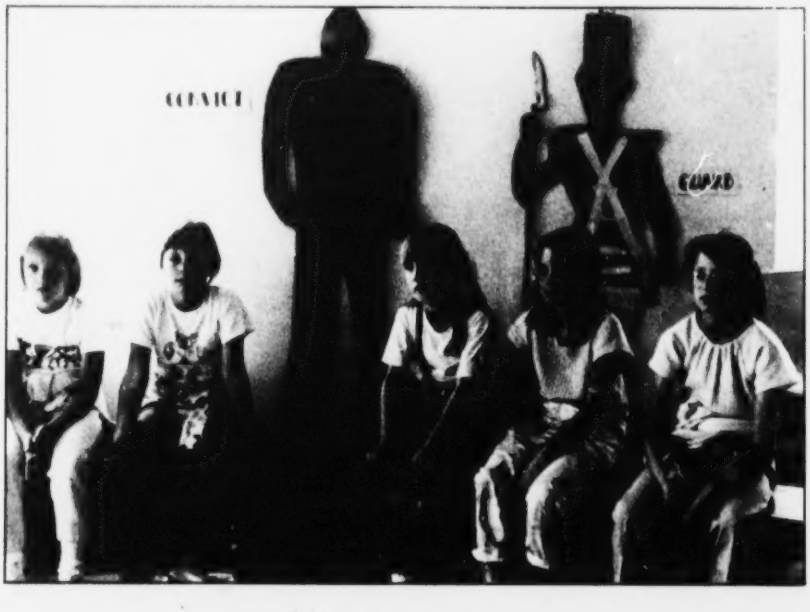
In activities such as these, you can stop the action after a couple of minutes for a discussion about the clues you and the students gave each other.

3. You knock at an imaginary door in front of a student. If the student responds by miming the opening of the door, you begin a conversation in role as, for example, a person making a survey of home heating. You may then knock at other doors and ask questions about the method of heating used in that household.

Interacting

Still in a large circle (or in two parallel lines) you designate the area as 'the street where we all live'.

Begin by gathering ideas about the sorts of jobs people do outside in their yards on a Saturday morning. Ask the students to decide what each of them is doing, and to begin the activity. ('It is Saturday morning; we are in our front yards doing Saturday jobs.') Once they have the idea, ask them to continue, but to ask a neighbour to help with the job or offer to help a neighbour. Then, **in a low-key role** as a local resident, you move about, chatting to various people about the jobs they are doing.



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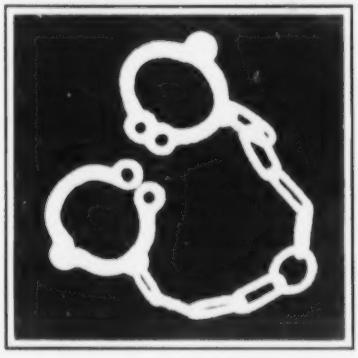


Stop the drama after a few minutes and ask the students to tell what clues they gave and picked up from each other, what was difficult, what misunderstandings there were, and so on.

Where are we?

This activity begins with a quick discussion to gather ideas about places where people might be seen standing together—for example, at a bus-stop, outside the principal's office, in a lift. The suggestions could be written on the blackboard for later reference.

The students work in pairs. Person A decides on the setting (where) and activity (what), without telling Person B. Person B is the 'blank', who stands waiting to pick up clues from A, when the activity begins. Person A starts the activity by approaching B and initiating a conversation. Through action and language, Person A gives B information and hints about where they are and what they are doing. The activity continues for one or two minutes.

Students can then change over, so Person A becomes the 'blank', and B initiates another scene using a different situation.

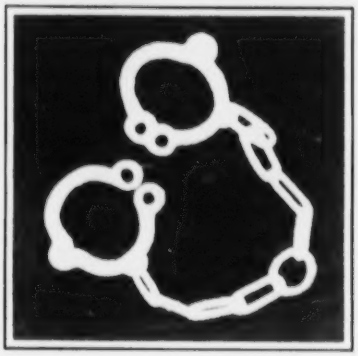
You may wish to complete this exercise with a brief discussion. Ask the students how they managed as the 'blank', how quickly they grasped the clues from their partners, about where they were and what they were doing.

Composite role

The students (either the whole class or a group) take on a role **as one person**. The teacher takes on a role as someone who is to question the 'composite role' about a past event (for example, a police officer questioning a teenager about an accident he or she has witnessed). The challenge to the students is to listen to each other so they can give answers that are consistent with what has already been said. The following is a sample of what might transpire.

Police Officer (teacher in role)—Where were you standing when the accident happened?
Student 1—I was about to cross the road . . .
Officer (to Student 2)—Just what did you see?
Student 2—There was this Holden—went through the light.
Officer (to Student 3)—Did you notice the driver?
Student 3—No, not really . . .
Officer (to Student 4)—D'you remember anything about the car?
Student 4—Just that it was green—and battered—looked as if someone had rolled it.
Officer (to Student 5)—Can you tell me what happened? What did you see?
Student 5—Well, this old bloke was in front of me—going to cross the road—and the Holden hit him just after he stepped off the pavement . . .
Officer (to Student 6)—Did the Holden brake at all—or slow down?
Student 6—Dunno—I just saw a man running to help the old bloke and the car was gone.

The questioning would proceed in this way as the teacher and students contributed detail about the chosen event.



Other situations which could be used to give students some experience of answering questions in role include:

1. Students in composite role as a celebrity recently returning to his or her home town after an absence (for example, returning from the Olympic Games, or after a tour with a pop group). The teacher takes the role of interviewer.

2. Student group in composite role as a friend of a missing person. The teacher is in role as the police officer asking questions to build up a picture of the missing person and of his or her habits, personality and interests.

3. Student group in composite role as a traveller returned from an exotic place (for example, the Amazon forests, Antarctica, the moon, the Sahara Desert) or from a place which the students have been learning about (for example, the Kimberleys, China, New Guinea). Again, the teacher is in role as the interviewer.

Note: In these activities it is important not to play the interviewer or police officer in a threatening manner, but to keep the activity cool and give the students time to think and respond consistently with what has already been said. The activity should not be used as a means to try to trip up or confuse the students. For young students, the teacher may prefer to be part of their composite role. The questions then take the form: 'What did I do then?', 'What happened to me when . . .' and so forth.

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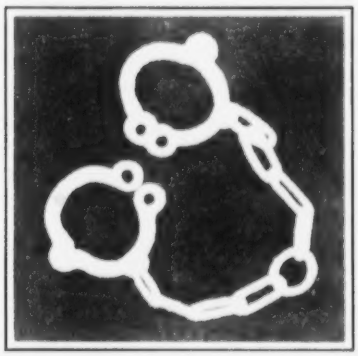


Situations relating to Port Arthur's history (See *Port Arthur Alive*, Parts 3 to 5) and other relevant topics can be used in the activity once the students have some knowledge of the selected subject. Examples:

1. The students are in composite role as a woman or man who came to Port Arthur as an assigned convict servant in the 1830s; the teacher is in role as a reporter. The interview might take place in 1850 or 1860, after the convict has received his or her freedom.

2. The students are in composite role as an immigrant newly arrived from England, who is seeking work in Hobart Town in the 1840s. The teacher is in role as an employer interviewing this immigrant, to find out about the work this person has done.

3. The students are in composite role as the owner of a prosperous farm, who has reported seeing a bushranger on the property. The teacher is in role as the military officer who has been sent to investigate the incident.

Comparing past and present

Often students need time to realise how different a past time was, compared with their own. Simple activities like this one help students to begin to appreciate such differences.

This question is asked: 'What can you see in this room? What would have been different 150 years ago?'

After a general discussion during which a number of features are identified and the likely 1830 alternatives are discussed, students are asked to work in pairs as follows:

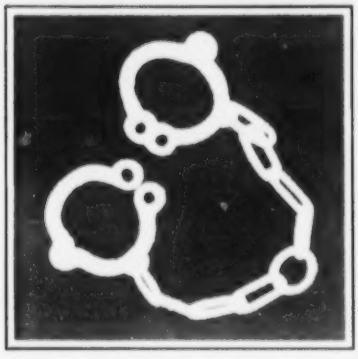
One person (A) is from the past (living in 1830); the other (B) is of the present day. Person A asks about some modern feature, object or material in the room (say, something electrical, or a ball-point pen, or something made of plastic), and Person B has to try to describe it, what it is used for and how it works. Person A asks questions during the explanation to elicit as detailed an answer as possible.

Students then reverse roles and Person B (now in role as the person from the past) chooses another object or feature of the room to ask about.

Still image

The still image or tableau is a useful and thought-provoking activity in which students are challenged to express the essence of an idea. It is a valuable tool for reflection during an extended drama. (For some applications, see the examples in Sections 3 and 5 of this booklet.)

Basically the activity consists of asking students (usually in groups of three to five) to prepare a grouping of characters, or tableau, so that others look at it and are able to glean information about attitudes and relationships between the characters. To ask other students simply to 'guess what they are doing' or 'guess what they are' is to ignore the possibilities for learning of this activity. It is important that the students understand the purpose and subtleties of



this technique, and are encouraged to discuss the ways in which they can communicate attitudes and information.

There are many possibilities for using the Port Arthur material to make still images that will enable attitudes, values and moral issues to be discussed. However, the ideas on which the still images are to be based must have been explored **before** the images are made, otherwise the activity becomes merely the depiction of frozen action with no understanding of the issues or attitudes that lie behind the event, or of other events which preceded it.

Remember that in order to get at underlying motives and feelings, the teacher's questioning must help students to go beyond 'guess who I am and what I am doing'.

In order to make their still image, students will have to discuss carefully:

- who the figures are to represent (the characters);
- the setting (for example, indoors, on deck, in the bush);
- the activity being used to convey the attitudes and relationships;
- the positions of characters in relation to each other, to express attitudes and emotions (for example, dominance, subservience, dislike, concern, sympathy);
- the use of space (near to, far from, touching, separate) to convey attitudes and emotions;
- eye direction—the focus for the scene (for example, all or some participants looking at one person, or looking away from one another, or looking up or down).

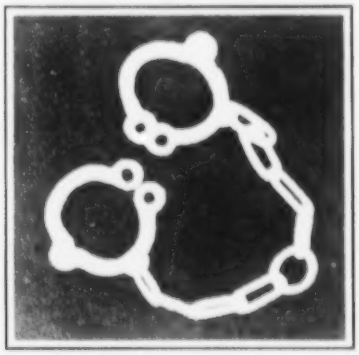
Having asked the students to make a still image, you can deepen their understanding of attitudes and relationships in a number of ways:

Captions. Ask the students to write a brief caption on a sheet of paper. When they show their still image to their classmates, the caption is displayed nearby.

Questioning. Your questions to the onlookers are crucial in helping them to focus on particular aspects and to see the implications and meanings in the still image. For example:

- What do the positions of A and B in relation to the rest of the group suggest about their feelings or attitudes toward one another?
- What does the fact that everyone except A is looking at C suggest?
- What can you tell about the characters' attitudes towards learning, patriotism, law and order etc.?

Comments. Ask the students to decide what the characters they are portraying might be thinking. Each student is to select one line or brief comment that might express the character's thoughts at that moment. One by one, while maintaining the still image, they speak the lines aloud. (You could give the cue to speak by touching each person in turn.) Spoken aloud, the thoughts provide further opportunity for questions and discussion.



Short scenes. Ask the students to prepare a short scene, with dialogue, of the 60 seconds leading up to the still image they have already selected and discussed. The dialogue may occur naturally or students may be asked to devise one line each to symbolise their characters.

Teacher in role

Taking a role **does not** involve you, the teacher, in elaborate 'acting'—having to adopt a different accent or voice, having to gesticulate, pose or adopt any artificial mannerisms.

Taking a role **does** involve adopting an **attitude**. The 'facts' or biographical content and background information of the situation you decide to use will indicate the attitude appropriate to your role. Your attitude may, for instance, be one of the following:

- I abhor the treatment I saw meted out to the convicts (example: Mrs Irvine, Example 1 in Section 3 of this book).
- Convicts are a vicious lot—they must be punished (example: a military officer on board a convict transport ship).
- I've worked hard for this farm—I'll not hesitate to shoot anyone I catch stealing from me (example: a settler threatened by bushrangers).
- It was poverty—seeing my family starving—that drove me to steal (example: a convict).
- Hobart Town is an uncivilised place. I long for the friends I had back home (example: the wife of an official or free settler newly arrived from England).
- I've begun a new life in Van Diemen's Land. I'm willing to work hard to make a success of my business (example: a free settler).
- Yes, I was unjustly treated and abused, but it was a long time ago and life has to go on (example: old Mr Derricourt, Example 6 in Section 3 of this book).
- What was done to me has crippled me for life—I'll never forget or forgive the people who caused me to suffer (example: an ex-convict who feels differently from the one above).

The chosen attitude will not necessarily be expressed in words such as these, but will colour everything that is said (and done).

When trying out a role for the first time, it is often helpful to explain to the class that you, like them, will be taking a role. Encourage them to take the activity seriously, as you do. Explain that this is one way to feel what it might have been like to live through events in our history.

Interviews in role

Possibly some of the easiest in-role activities involve interviews, in which the students, in role as, for example, reporters, ask questions of you or another adult. The adult takes the role of a person with information about some topic which the students are to learn about. The box opposite contains a simple example which can be adapted to a wide range of topics.

Through these activities students are challenged to think of the questions that will 'unlock' information. In addition, because they are in role as someone other than themselves, they have a reason for wanting the information. As migrants, for example, they need to

Settlers find out about Van Diemen's Land

Situation: England, some time in the early 19th century.

Roles and situation: The students are in role as people who wish to emigrate to Van Diemen's Land; the teacher is in role as a free settler who has recently returned from V.D.L.

The people question the returned free settler to find out all they can about V.D.L.

The students, working in pairs, then prepare a list of 15 to 20 essential items (tools, goods, household items and so on) that they will need to take with them to Van Diemen's Land, in addition to personal luggage.

know what they will need to take with them to Van Diemen's Land; as reporters, they must get the information to write an article.

Your students may already have done some study and reading about Port Arthur, conditions in England at the time of transportation, life in the hulks, and so forth, or you may wish to introduce them to the topics by means of in-role activities. To use an in-role activity of this kind can be a most dynamic and vivid introduction to any issue. It is also likely to provoke students' curiosity and motivate them to further reading. These activities may also be used after a visit to Port Arthur.

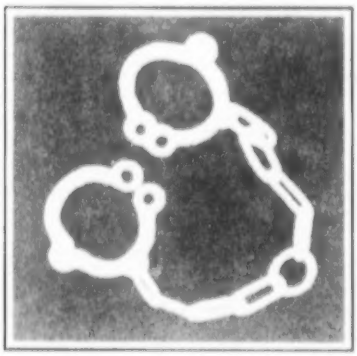
Selecting a role

Decide on your role, the setting, the students' roles and the reason for the interview (the students' task).

Sometimes it is useful to distance yourself a little from the person whom the reporters are interested in. This means that, in role, you are able to say, 'I don't really know—he didn't tell me . . .' or 'I think it might have been . . .' or 'I'm not sure . . .', and to leave some questions open to speculation. Often this is a useful technique to arouse curiosity and students' speculation.

In Example 3 of Section 3 of this book—about William Swallow, convict mariner—the role suggested is Swallow's wife, whose knowledge of his journey to Van Diemen's Land comes from his letters to her. Similarly, in Example 4—about Chartist John Frost—it is his wife, Mary, who is interviewed, and her husband's letters are her source of information about his experiences.

In Example 6, however, it is suggested that the teacher take the role of the elderly ex-convict William Derricourt himself. Similarly, in Example 7, Ann Forrest herself, a convict servant, is suggested as the role to be taken by the teacher. In these two examples, it is assumed that because considerable time has elapsed since the people were at Port Arthur, the issues are no longer as 'hot' or emotionally engaging as they were at the time. The lime-lapse also allows the characters 'to forget' if a difficult question is asked; later the teacher, out of role, may do some research to find out the answer.



Signalling your role

It helps to use a convention to establish when you are in role and when you are not. One way to do this is by telling the students that when you sit in a particular chair or stand in a particular place you are no longer yourself but are in role as, for example, Mrs Irvine or elderly Mr Derricourt.

Another way to signal you are in role is to wear a particular piece of outer clothing (for example, a shawl or an old overcoat) or carry an object such as a walking stick. Such things can be removed quickly or put aside when you are not in role.

Don't be afraid to stop the in-role activity to review, with the students, the information they have and what they still need to know. You might ask the students to discuss and decide on the questions they would like to ask the character being interviewed. Then, when you and the students are back in role, they are able to ask these questions and others that may emerge.

When you are in role, resist the temptation to give a lecture and keep your answers fairly brief. Often it is possible to hint at some other matter to arouse curiosity about some topic or aspect that is important. Students may pick up the hint and ask questions which lead to that and other important matters.

Preparation

Before the lesson begins, read the relevant sections of Parts 3, 4 and 5 of *Port Arthur Alive* (*Background*, *Eyewitness* and *Profiles*) to obtain information on which to base your answers.

The background information you prepare in order to answer the students' questions should be reasonably accurate to reflect general knowledge about the social background of the period, the likely social stratum to which the character belongs and the attitudes of people of that time. Historical truthfulness does not mean knowing all the dates, facts and figures, but having a feeling for the people of the period and their ways of life.

Draw up a potted biography of your character. Fill in from other sources or from your imagination any gaps in the information presented in this folder (likely numbers of brothers and sisters or children, occupational details etc.) in case you are asked questions about these subjects.

Once you are in role and answering students' questions, you will find yourself using knowledge from many different sources, some of it obtained years ago.

Working with another adult. Sometimes it may be possible to work with another adult who could take on a low-key role which will support you and the students in your role-taking. Sometimes this second adult will act as an unofficial chairman to encourage the students' questions, to ensure that they ask questions one at a time and to signal the close of the interview (for example, 'I think Mr Derricourt has talked enough—he's looking very tired.')

Alternatively, it is possible for the major role to be taken by a visiting adult with knowledge about the topic: for example, one of the people employed by National Parks and Wildlife Service to work on the history of Port Arthur. The teacher, in that case, would take on the supportive or secondary role.

In the examples which follow, roles for two adults have been suggested, but it is possible for the class teacher to carry out the activities without a second adult.

The lesson begins—the in-role interview

Briefly introduce the idea of role-taking to the students. Explain that you, the teacher, and they will be taking roles. Establish:

- the time and the setting (for example, Mrs Lempriere's home in Bellerive about 1880);
- the students' roles (for example, reporters who wish to interview Mrs Lempriere and her daughter about the social life of families of administrative officers at Port Arthur in the 1830s and 40s);
- the students' in-role tasks (for example, to ask questions in order to get information to write an article about social life in early Van Diemen's Land, or to obtain Mrs Irvine's opinions about the treatment of convicts).

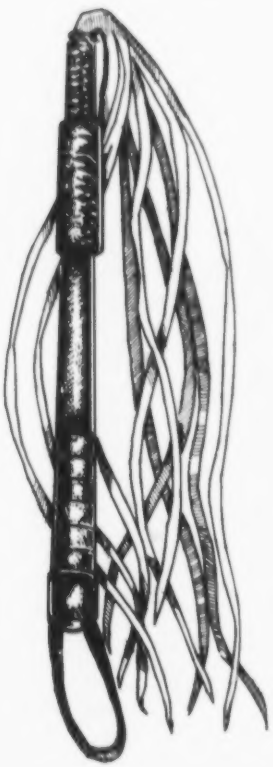
A brief discussion may be necessary to help students decide on the kind of information they require and the questions they will ask.

After the in-role interview, the students, still in their assigned roles, may:

- discuss the attitude taken by their newspaper towards the government and the convicts, and write a headline that their editor would accept;
- write an article on some aspect of the information given by the interviewee.

Out of role, you and the students may discuss:

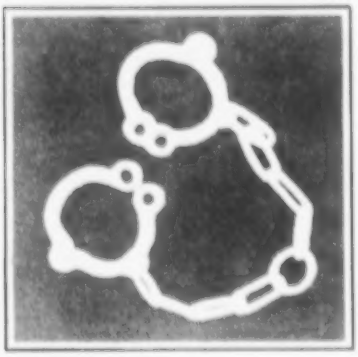
- the way in which attitudes create a bias that changes the so-called 'facts' of any event;
- current trends and attitudes in comparison with events and attitudes relevant to Port Arthur and its history.



First of all it is important to realise that although successful drama teaching requires no special ability or actor's training, nevertheless there are certain skills which actors and drama teachers have in common.

The most important is the ability to believe in an 'as if' or pretend situation. **Unless the teacher can demonstrate her ability to suspend disbelief, why should the children**? It is surely not only illogical but counter-productive to suggest, even by implication, that the activity you wish the children to engage in is one that is beneath your dignity. **Therefore the first requirement of any drama teacher is the ability to share in some measure the imaginative activity of the class**.

(From Linnell, R., *Approaching Classroom Drama*, Edward Arnold, London, 1982)



The teacher's attitudes. Much of the success of using drama as a teaching tool will depend on your attitudes, how seriously you take the activity and your commitment to making it work for the students. Taking the activity seriously does not mean being solemn—you can enjoy it and have fun—but if you don't believe that what you are doing is valuable, and that it has an intrinsic truth, don't expect the students to take it seriously either!

Using objects

Symbols for people and events

Objects provide a valuable focus for interview activities and story-building in the classroom. Objects are strong symbols of the people who owned them and of events connected with these people's lives.

By studying an object carefully and handling it, you and the students have a clear focus for questions and speculations:

- about **how** the object was made and used;
- about **who** might have owned it, made or used it;
- about the implications these ideas raise concerning people's lives and feelings;
- about events of the period;
- about places and types of jobs suggested by the object;
- about any particular features such as rust, dents, scratches, signs of wear or damage, and so on.

Note: The Port Arthur Education Centre has a small collection of objects relating to Port Arthur's history available for use in this way by groups visiting Port Arthur. Contact the Education Officer, telephone (002) 502290, for details.

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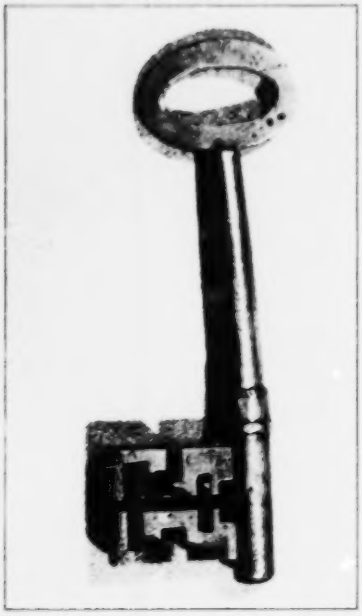
People and roles suggested by objects

Object	Makers and users	Owners
Shoemaker's last	Shoemaker, his apprentice, wife or daughter	Descendant of the shoemaker
Lock key	Locksmith, blacksmith, his apprentice, member of his family who may have helped in the business	Owner of a house, guard or jailer, ex-convict
Butterchurn	Assigned servant or ex-convict in service as a dairymaid or domestic servant, or the carpenter who made it	Owner of the property, servants, mistress, master; a descendant of either owner or servant
Horseshoe	Blacksmith, stable-hand, coachman	Descendant of any of these, poor/wealthy owner of a horse/horses
Iron chain or leg-iron	Blacksmith, jailer, convict, ship's captain	Antique dealer, museum curator
Flat-iron	Laundry-maid at, for example, the house of Dr Brownell	Descendant
Heavy piece of timber or old fence post	An ex-convict, timber worker, carpenter	Property owner or descendant

These are just a few objects and roles which might lead students into an exploration of life in the 19th century at Port Arthur or other parts of Tasmania.



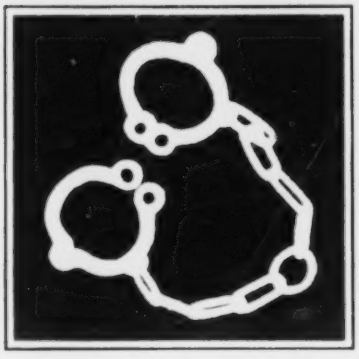
Stories from objects

An object provides a useful focus for building up a story about the owner, maker or user of the object. Having the object actually available for examination helps to rouse the students' interest in how the object was used and provides a clear focus for the activity.

There are many objects which can be used to evoke the period of early settlement in Van Diemen's Land. As well as the objects mentioned earlier, these might include:

- tools—an old spade, or blacksmithing tools;
- household articles—iron pot, box or small chest, sampler;
- documents—an old map, or facsimiles of early convict documents such as those provided in the Tasmanian Museum's kit, *Convict Documents* (see Section 6 of this book);
- personal items—signet ring, clothing (for example, a baby's old-fashioned bonnet), an old book, old-fashioned spectacles;
- natural objects—a shell, a pebble, tooth of an animal.

When students have had little or no experience of story-building, they find it hard to make up a story without some stimulation and guidance. Those who volunteer to tell a story often go on and on, while the rest of the class is bored. It is best, therefore, to help students by leading them in whole-class story-building, in which you ask questions and help them to put the story together. In this way they can begin to understand the shape and form of stories.



Whole-class story-building. Sit in a circle so everyone can see everyone else. Either the students can take turns around the circle, or you can ask for volunteers. At the beginning taking turns is quicker, provided that students know they can say 'pass' if they cannot think of anything to contribute. The object you have chosen is the focus for the story. Try a procedure like the following:

1. Use an object that relates to early settlement in Van Diemen's Land or to Port Arthur.

2. Pass the object round the circle, and ask each person to say one thing they note about it (for example: 'it's rusty', 'it's got hinges').

3. After five to seven comments have been made, ask the next student or a volunteer to recall all that has been said so far. Let others help if the person can't remember all the comments.

4. Ask the next person to suggest who might have owned or used the object. You could ask the next four or five students to suggest other owners: choose one and ask the next person to begin describing the chosen owner of the object. Let four or five people describe the owner.

5. Ask the next person where the owner lived — and get four or six descriptive phrases about the place.

6. Then ask: 'Why was this object so precious or so important to him or her?'

7. 'What happened?' And 'How could our story end?'

Here are three useful story-frames which can be filled out like the example above:

The lost-found story:
- Who owns it? Describe the person.
- How did he or she lose it?
- Who found it?
- What might happen next?
- Did the owner get it back? If so, how? If not, what happened?
- How might our story end?

The ordinary or unusual story:
- Who owns this object?
- What did the owner do each day? (Establish what usually happened.)
- But one day something different happened—what was it?
- What happened next—and how could our story end?

The journey story:
- The person who owns this object has to go on a journey—I wonder why?
- Where does the owner live?
- Where did the owner have to go? Why?
- How did he or she travel?
- Whom did he or she meet?
- What might happen? How could our story end?

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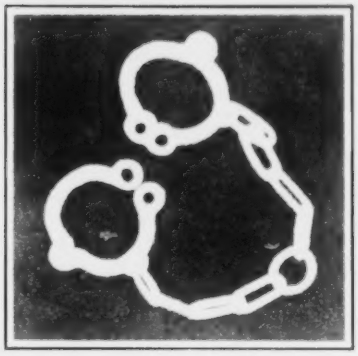


In-role interviews

Having explored the object as suggested in the previous section, you might take on a role as one of the following:

- the owner, maker or user of the object—for example, the blacksmith who made the horseshoe, or the servant-girl who used the flat-iron;
- the spouse, son, daughter or other relative of the owner, maker or user of the object, who would either have helped that person or have seen him or her make or use the object;
- a descendant, who would be able to recall family stories about the significance of the object and about the person to whom it belonged.

In adopting a role, you need to give yourself a fictitious but plausible name and life story. You need to prepare yourself for the activity by reading some information about the relevant craft, work or events suggested by the object.

The students adopt the role of archivists who wish to find out about the person connected with the object. They are asked to accept the dramatic convention of bringing people back from the past in order to interview them about their work and experiences. The students should be given a task or focus which gives a purpose for the activity. For example:

- to obtain information about a particular trade or occupation performed at Port Arthur in the 1840s; or
- to find out the biography of the person connected with the object.

If you are working with another adult, one of you can take the role of head archivist and act as co-ordinator to encourage questions from the students; the other is in role as the person connected with the object.

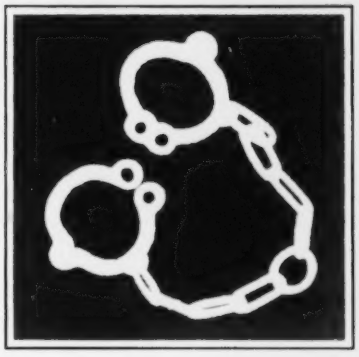
An extension of this activity, especially for students of grades 5 to 7, might involve preparing drawings of other objects which were significant in the life of the owner, maker or user of the focus object. The plan for such an activity might be as follows:

1. Explore the object (as in *Whole-class story-building* above).

2. Discuss and decide who owned, made and used the object, the name of the person, and a **brief** biography of that person. The biography is built up from answers to the teacher's questions. Students are expected to accept the chosen suggestions and to build upon them consistently. Comments made in (1) should be elaborated and built into the story. (For example: 'How might the flat-iron have been damaged?'—referring to a mark noted by a student.)

3. Each student is now asked to draw one object (an imagined one, not the focus object which they can see and have handled), which he or she considers was important to the person whose story has been developed in (2). The drawings are displayed.

4. The students take roles as archivists who have received a box of the objects (the drawings on display) and who know little about the person's life—that is, only the **brief** details decided upon in (2). They are now to have the chance to interview that person, or a descendant



of that person, as described in the preceding activity. The students may prepare for this interview by working in pairs to formulate questions they wish to ask about certain objects.

5. While the students are preparing their questions, the teacher will need to look at the objects and think of ways in which they can be woven into a consistent biography.

6. The teacher takes on the chosen role—of either the significant person or a descendant—and answers the students' questions.

7. Finally, students may be asked to write an explanatory label for their drawing, imagining that the object is to be displayed in the museum.

Historical accuracy and research

Many of the characters in the drama and stories which you develop with your students will be fictitious, but they will be believable within the general framework of what is known about social conditions during the early settlement of Van Diemen's Land. Do not be disturbed if some details are historically inaccurate. Unless they imply gross misunderstandings which have to be dealt with at once, it is better to let them go and, if necessary, refer to them later.

Once students become absorbed in role-play and are committed to the fictional but realistic situation of the drama, they become curious about 'what really happened?', 'what did they use?' and 'how did they do . . .?' It is then that they are motivated to do their own research, thus naturally developing their own standards of accuracy. At that stage you will need to know which books or other resources to point out to them.

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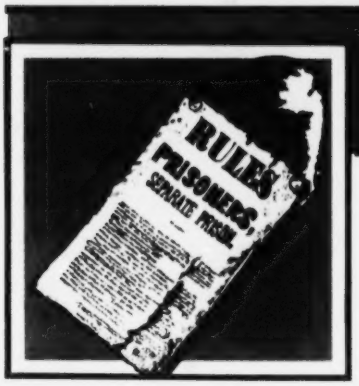


The following eight sample activities provide a simple framework for any number of variations.

These suggestions for 'interviews in role' are based mainly on *Profiles* (Part 5 of *Port Arthur Alive*) but similar activities could be developed from any of the historical material in Parts 3 to 5, or other historical resources.

Example 1: Mrs Irvine— a woman's view of convicts

Reference—Eyewitness 7 (in Part 4 of *Port Arthur Alive*).

Setting—England in the 1850s.

Roles and situation—Mrs Jemima Irvine (teacher in role) is being interviewed by reporters (students in role) about what she saw of the convicts and their treatment during her stay at Port Arthur. Mrs Irvine might be accompanied by a friend or relative if a second teacher is to be involved.

Ideas for extension—

1. In planning such an exercise, the teacher might consider using as a guide the idea of opposites, as outlined in Section 4 of this book. In the case of Mrs Irvine's observations of convict life at Port Arthur, 'brutality/compassion' would seem a useful pair of concepts to work with.

2. Working in groups of three to five, the students are asked to make still images that will show clearly the attitudes of convicts to guards, of convicts to one another, or of free settlers to convicts.

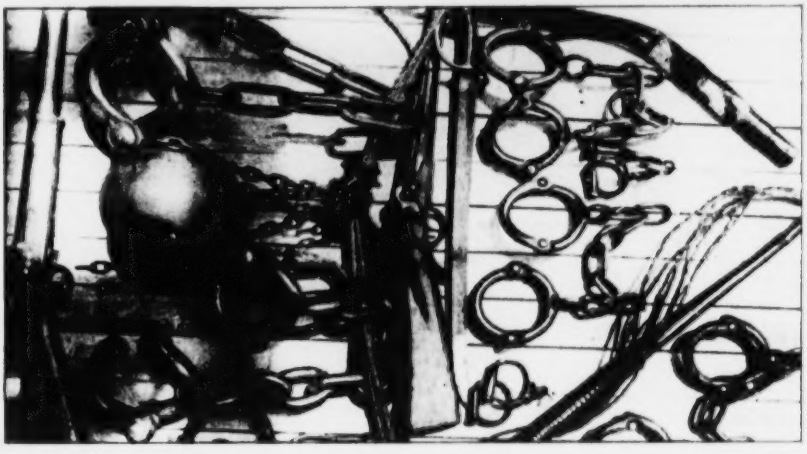
Example 2: Mrs Charlotte Lempriere— private lives

Reference—Profile 23; also Profile 3 (in Part 5 of *Port Arthur Alive*).

Setting—Bellerive, Tasmania, about 1880.

Roles and situation—Charlotte Lempriere (teacher in role), then aged about 77, and her daughter, Fanny Westbrook (second teacher or another adult in role), are being interviewed by reporters (students in role). The reporters are eager to learn about the social life of the free officials and their families at Port Arthur in the 1830s and 1840s, in order to write articles for their newspapers.

Ideas for extension—Students in groups of three to five are asked to prepare still images that show the attitudes of people of the time towards military officers, entertainments and social occasions, servants, education, the country they had left behind or their new homeland. The students will need the teacher's help as they select and discuss ideas and set up their images.



Example 3: William Swallow—a convict mariner

Reference—Profile 22 (in Part 5 of *Port Arthur Alive*).

Setting—England about 1826.

Roles and situation—It is near the end of Swallow's seven-year transportation sentence. He has written to his wife and elderly father or mother about his journey to Van Diemen's Land, and the fact that he served out his time on board ship as a sailor. Reporters (students in role) have asked to interview Swallow's wife (teacher in role) and his elderly father or mother (second adult in role) after hearing about Swallow's earlier act of heroism (saving the ship during a severe storm). Swallow has written to his wife about his voyage and subsequent events. The reporters ask questions about:

- Swallow's childhood;
- his apprenticeship on board a Baltic collier, or coal-ship;
- his marriage and family life;
- his crime and sentence;
- his journey to Van Diemen's Land and why he was allowed to serve out his sentence as a sailor.

Ideas for extension—

1. The idea of opposite concepts to guide a teacher's thinking may be useful here (see Section 4 of this book. In Swallow's case, perhaps we can examine his life as a convict *and* a hero—two apparently conflicting notions.

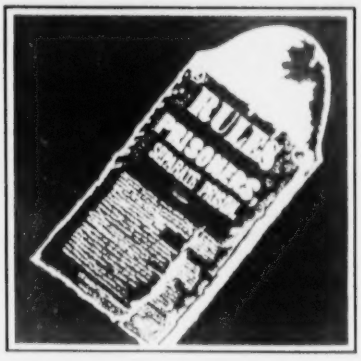
2. The students, in groups of three to five, are asked to select a significant moment in Swallow's life to depict as a still image. From the images, onlookers should be able to build up some idea of the character of Swallow, his feelings and attitudes.

Example 4: John Frost—political prisoner

Reference—Profile 30 (in Part 5); Background 1 (in Part 3 of *Port Arthur Alive*).

Setting—England, 1840.

Roles and situation—Frost has written to his wife, Mary (teacher in role). She is interviewed by reporters (students in role), who wish to



know about the fate of Frost, a former leader of the Chartist movement. A second adult might take the role of a relative of Mary's or of John Frost's; this relative is present at the interview to support her. This role allows the second adult to support and encourage the participants and subtly co-ordinate the interview as necessary. In this activity the focus could be upon any or all of the following:

- the issues of Chartism;
- social and/or political conditions in England;
- John Frost's arrest and sentence;
- information gleaned from his letters about the voyage to Van Diemen's Land and his work under sentence at Port Arthur;
- conditions at Port Arthur.

Ideas for extension—The students, in small groups of three to five, can be asked to prepare still images that reflect social conditions in Britain in the 1830s and 1840s. From the images, the onlookers should be able to discern the feelings and attitudes of people towards one another and towards their work.

Another possible focus for still images might be scenes on board ship, such as those suggested in *Extended Activities* (Part 2 of *Port Arthur Alive*)—Example 4 (Crime in the 19th century), Lesson 4 (Transportation by sea). If the information on the selected focus (for example, 'the voyage') appears inadequate, the teacher may need to initiate a brief discussion about things such as the groups of people on board, where they might be housed, and their occupations and duties.

Example 5: Francis MacNamara—convict poet

Reference—Profile 18 (in Part 5 of *Port Arthur Alive*).

Setting—England, about 1841.

Roles and situation—MacNamara, on his way home to Ireland after serving his sentence at Port Arthur, has met a man who is offering to publish some of his poems. The roles of MacNamara and the editor are taken by two teachers. The students are in role as reporters who have heard about and are curious to meet the convict-poet. They are to write up articles about MacNamara for their newspapers.

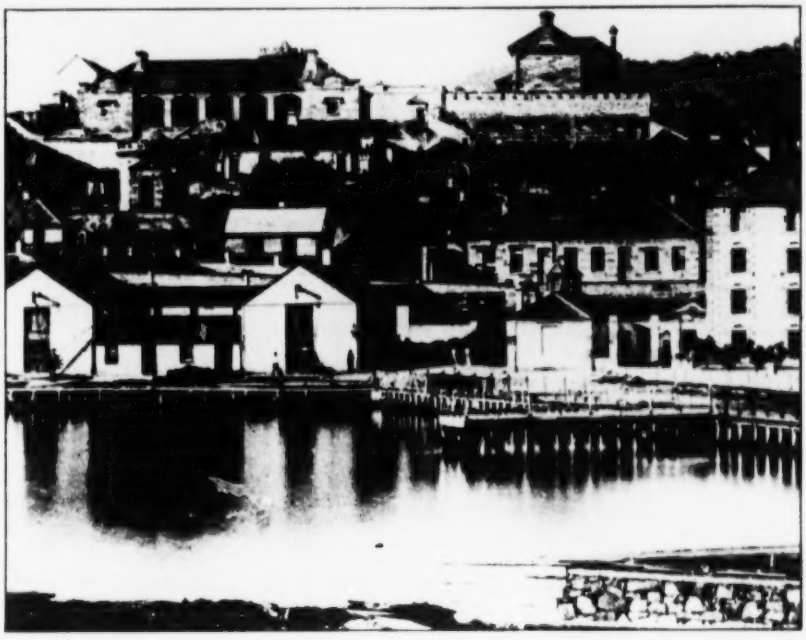
Ideas for extension—The teacher looking for a focusing idea around which to build a story might begin by looking at MacNamara's personality in terms of the opposing concepts 'sensitivity' (shown by his writing) and 'coarseness' (suggested by his convict record).

Example 6: William Derricourt—an old hand

Reference—Profile 11 (in Part 5), with numerous references in *Eyewitness* (Part 4 of *Port Arthur Alive*).

Setting—Sydney about 1880.

Roles and situation—The elderly Derricourt (teacher in role) has agreed to tell the story of his detention at Port Arthur to a group of reporters (students in role), who have heard that a Mr Louis Becke is writing a book about the old man's experiences. The second teacher takes on the role of either Derricourt's landlady who has known him



for some time or the author, Becke. The activity could focus on one area of Derricourt's life, such as his time at Port Arthur, his feelings now (in 1880) about the treatment he received, or general reminiscences about his life.

Example 7: Ann Forrest— a female convict

Reference—Profile 28; also Profiles 3 and 23 (in Part 5) and Eyewitness 7 and 16 (in Part 4 of *Port Arthur Alive*).

Setting—Hobart Town about 1860.

Roles and situation—Ann Forrest (teacher in role) has agreed to be interviewed by historians (students in role) about her time at Port Arthur, over 20 years earlier, as an assigned servant for the Lempriere family. (She was one of only a handful of female convicts at Port Arthur.) The historians are also interested in the conditions and treatment of convict women at the Female Factory in South Hobart.

Example 8: Richard Jones— religious conflict

Reference—Profile 33 (in Part 5); also Background 6, Eyewitness 8 (Parts 3 and 4 of *Port Arthur Alive*).

Setting—Executive Council chambers, Hobart Town, 1842.

Roles and situation—Captain Booth (teacher in role—see Profile 31) has been called into Hobart Town to be questioned by the members of the Executive Council, a group of senior officials including some military officers. (The Council advised the Governor on important matters of policy, and the Governor himself was its chairman.) The reason for summoning Booth is that Richard Jones, a Catholic

convict, has been punished with solitary confinement for refusing to attend Sunday Divine Service (conducted by a Protestant minister) at Port Arthur.

The teacher might prepare for the activity by writing out a memorandum from Governor Sir John Franklin, calling for an Executive Council meeting. Franklin sees Jones's action as 'a matter of extreme importance' and a grave threat to discipline and security. (See Eyewitness 8 for details.) A student can then read out the memorandum, after which the members of the Council would have the chance to question Booth about the incident and assist the Governor in deciding what to do about Jones.

The written memorandum could be worded in such a way as to express Franklin's antagonism towards the prisoner on both religious (anti-Catholic) and disciplinary grounds.

Ideas for extension—Some opposing concepts that arise when we consider this historical event are: authority/religious conviction, Catholic/Protestant. Teachers may find such concepts useful focusing devices around which to build stories (see Section 4).

These are only a few of the many possible situations and roles which can be used for in-role interview activities. For more advanced ideas, see *Extended Activities* (Part 2 of *Port Arthur Alive*).

The Kieran Egan approach

Teaching through story-telling, an approach formulated by Kieran Egan and outlined in Section 1 of this book, is relevant to all *Port Arthur Alive* activities. This approach may be incorporated into some of the examples in Section 3 of this book, or into the more advanced activities in the second *Port Arthur Alive* book, *Extended Activities*.

Egan encourages the teacher to 'think of the lesson or unit as a good story to be told rather than as a set of objectives to be achieved and evaluated'. The 'story-form'—the underlying form or plot—is 'a basic intellectual tool' that helps us to make sense of the world and experience. Applying Egan's philosophy to role-play activities using *Port Arthur Alive* is not especially difficult, as the following example will show.

Example: A convict's existence at Port Arthur

Step 1—Establish the topic. In establishing the topic, in this case 'a convict's existence at Port Arthur', we must ask ourselves:

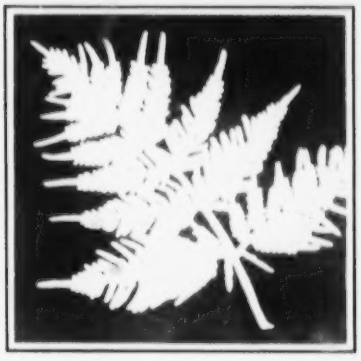
- **Why is this topic important—what is important about it?** In the case of our example, a possible answer is that the topic contains much of what Port Arthur has represented, both then and now: what it meant to be exiled and imprisoned—and what was involved in being a jailer.

- **Can it touch the students' feelings, and involve them? How?** In the example above, the students can become personally involved by using role-play techniques to follow an event or a course of events in a prisoner's life that clearly expresses his basic predicament: being forcibly detained and yearning to be free. Role-play techniques enable the students to see and feel things as the prisoner did.

Step 2—Select the opposites. These 'opposites' will give us the essence of the story we are to create. We should therefore be looking for concepts that represent something fundamental to our chosen topic: the situation of the convict at Port Arthur. A pair of opposing ideas that readily comes to mind is **imprisonment** (or confinement) and **freedom**. For this example, these will be the opposites on which we will base our story.

Step 3—Build the story. (Or, develop the content.) In doing so, we need to ask questions like:

- **What kinds of people can we find and use who will most clearly and vividly express the opposites we have chosen?** For some ideas, we can turn to *Eyewitness* (Part 4) and *Profiles* (Part 5), keeping in mind the next question.



- **What kinds of occurrences or situations will most clearly and dramatically express the chosen opposites?**

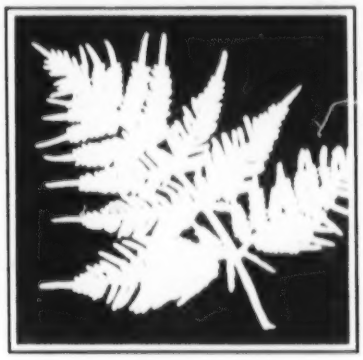
The Port Arthur careers of convicts Martin Cash (Profile 7) and Dennis Collins (Profile 26) illustrate different attitudes toward the problems and frustrations of being imprisoned. For Cash, the only answer was to flee the Peninsula, regardless of likely long-term consequences. Collins, too, sought to defy authority by escaping, but he obtained his freedom (like Patrick Minahan, Profile 29) through death. Both men felt they had been wrongfully imprisoned, so they felt completely justified in seeking to escape. Commandant Charles Booth (Profile 31), as the Peninsula's 'chief jailer', was the arch-opponent of Cash and Collins; his devotion to the cause of making Port Arthur 'escape-proof' made him the living symbol of repression through imprisonment.

In building a story involving these men, we need to look for likely situations that most dramatically illustrate the chosen opposites: **imprisonment** and **freedom**. In Eyewitness 9 (Escape) is an account of Cash's escape, complete with Booth's dramatic metaphor about the 'key' to the Peninsula. Eyewitness 10 (Convict Ballads) is Francis McNamara's verse celebrating the escape of fellow-Irishman Martin Cash. In Collins's Profile is an account of his death along with Rev. Manton's (Profile 20) 'stern warning'. Eyewitness 14 (Health, Sickness, Death) contains a convict's view of the procedure for burial of a convict, such as might have been Collins's fate.

Using these sources, possibly with the help of the appropriate background notes from Part 3, and with a degree of imagination, we can put together a story to express the opposites, imprisonment and freedom. In the story, Cash and Collins might have known each other in their native Ireland. Collins, the naval hero, was perhaps a father-figure to the young Martin before the law caught up with them. At Port Arthur (we can have them there together, although in reality nine years separated them), Cash is moved by the dying Collins to make his own protest against the system that confines him. The chief representative of this hateful system is Commandant Booth. Cash's eventual escape is celebrated by 'Frank the Poet' (Francis MacNamara, Profile 18) in an Irishman's shout of defiance to oppression.

In developing the story of Cash and Collins (and Booth), we must always remember that we are not investigating actions as such, but the states of mind that lie behind the actions. The main actions—the death of Collins and the escape of Cash—are a dramatic culmination of these states of mind. That is their value, but they should not be allowed to become too much of a distraction in themselves. Thus the means by which you choose to have the story told (perhaps using some of the dramatic techniques outlined in Sections 2 and 3 of this book) will concentrate heavily on the **lead-up** to the main action (particularly the motives of the main characters) and on **reflection** afterwards.

At the same time, an important point to remember is that the story, not the blackboard lecture, is to be the main vehicle for teaching.



A list of Port Arthur concepts

The box in this section contains a list of words that apply in some form or other to the history of Port Arthur.

Each word carries suggestions, implications and meanings far beyond the 'dictionary definition'. The list is by no means complete, but it might help to stimulate or organise your thinking about Port Arthur's history.

Following the approach outlined by Kieran Egan, you could use the list as an aid in selecting **opposites**, on which you will base your lesson planning. Accordingly, the words are in pairs of opposites (or approximate opposites) with opposing concepts in the adjacent column.

Concept	Opposing concept
Fear	Fearlessness
Isolation	Company
Compassion	Indifference
Loneliness	Companionship
Confinement	Freedom
Acceptance	Rejection
Contempt	Esteem
Authority	Rebellion
Penitence	Defiance
Respectability	Disrepute
Respect	Condescension
Guilt	Innocence
Involvement	Detachment
Justice	Injustice
Conflict	Harmony

Concept	Opposing concept
Trust	Mistrust
Contentment	Discontentment
Apathy	Commitment
Frustration	Satisfaction
Power	Impotence
Disrespect	Deference, respect
Superiority	Inferiority
Violence	Pacifism, non-violence
Rank	Equality
Pride	Humiliation, shame
Loyalty	Disloyalty
Punishment	Reward
Honesty	Dishonesty, corruption
Servility	Insubordination
Failure	Success

Teachers should investigate ways of introducing the concepts to the students **through the drama or story** rather than directly. Through the students' involvement in the unfolding drama, the meaning behind the words will become clear.

Many concepts do not have readily apparent opposites. Such attitudes or issues as homesickness, desperation, crime, victimisation and reform, all integral to the history of a penal settlement like Port Arthur, appear not to lend themselves to the idea of building stories based on opposites. Yet while the opposing concept may not be so clear cut, it is there all the same. Take the case of 'crime', for example: what may appear to authorities to be a crime may be a justifiable act of necessity in the view of the prisoner, whether the motivation is revenge, starvation, poverty or the like. Hence 'a justifiable act of necessity' might be considered the opposite of 'crime'. In the case of 'homesickness', an opposite might be found in a person's positive action to make the best of his or her place of living.

There are a number of locations at Port Arthur (and at the Coal Mines) which have their own unique dramatic qualities. These locations may be used as settings for drama activities during your visit, or they may enhance role-play work which you have already undertaken prior to your visit. Alternatively, visiting these places may provide a stimulus for later classroom work.

If you wish to include role-play in a visit to the Peninsula, be selective. Drama needs time to develop, and cramming in too many places and activities will be counter-productive.

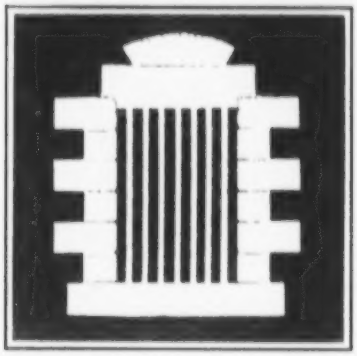
The following places provide evocative settings for dramatic work. Some possible activities are mentioned. Use the descriptions of role-play activities elsewhere in this booklet for practical guidance.

Most importantly, plan any on-site activities **before** you make your visit.

Commandant's Jetty

The Commandant's Jetty has an excellent view of Port Arthur. Although convicts arrived and were unloaded nearer to the Penitentiary, little remains of these wharves.

Personal background. The system of punishment through exile, called transportation, can be examined with a roll-call of convicts as they emerge from the ship. Either the whole group may take a composite role (dealing with a number of convicts in turn) or, in more advanced classes, each student may have a role of his or her own. Each 'convict' will be required to state his name, the crime for which he originally was transported, his age, place of birth, family and marital status, trade, the ship he came from England on, and the later offence which resulted in his being sent to Port Arthur: in other words, building a story. See Backgrounds 1 and 2 and profiles of convicts.



What then? Think about convicts' feelings and their impressions on arrival, and pose for 'group portraits' in which expression, posture and so forth convey this response.

Sea transport. A convict may wish to enter an official complaint about his treatment on the voyage from Hobart Town—see Eyewitness 2. (Remember that convicts rarely travelled straight from England to Port Arthur.)

Again, this is a story-building exercise: students may work in pairs or small groups to build a story about their treatment on the voyage. They then make a brief summary of their complaint, which is to be presented—verbally—to an official. The teacher takes the role of the official who questions them about their complaint.

First impressions of Port Arthur. Use information about the earlier lives of such people as Richard Newman (Profile 27), Charlotte Lempriere (Profiles 23, 3), Booth (Profile 31) or Thomas Brownell (Profile 24) to gauge what kinds of thoughts these people might have had on first seeing the wooded, forbidding hills, the pleasant bay, the low, timber buildings and, if they've been built at the time of the character's arrival, the stone Church and Guard Tower—and the gangs of yellow-suited convicts at their labours. Booth had been in the tropical West Indies for seven years, and might have hoped for warmer weather, for example.

The still-image technique (see Section 2 in this book) might be valuable here. Students might be asked to work in groups as the family (including servants) of one of the four people mentioned above. The still image might be of the moment before they disembarked—or as they stand together on the shore at Port Arthur before going to their quarters. The still images should express their attitudes and emotions on seeing Port Arthur for the first time. Next, the teacher could ask each character to speak his or her thoughts aloud.

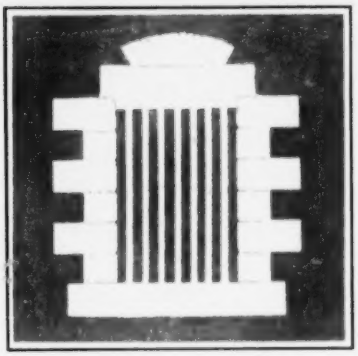
There might be time, either on site or back in the classroom, for students to adopt a role as a convict, newly arrived in Port Arthur, and to write a short letter to family or friends back in England about this person's first impressions of Port Arthur.

Guard Tower

The Guard Tower has a commanding view of the port and the Penitentiary area. It was also easily defensible in the case of convict rebellion (which never happened). At the brow of the hill behind were the Military Barracks, also strategically situated close to the Commandant's House and the signalling mast behind. Underneath the Guard Tower is an enclosed room, originally designed as a guard room but possibly later used as a cell for military offenders or convicts awaiting trial in Hobart Town for serious offences.

Security and the military role. The work of the military is outlined in Background 4. The grassed area behind the Guard Tower is an excellent place for developing ideas such as those in the following example.

The students could adopt the roles of the two soldiers, Private Murphy (Profile 34) and Private Bayliss (Profile 10). In role, they



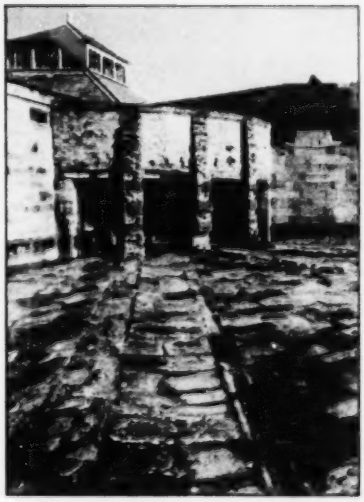
discuss their feelings about Port Arthur and their hopes for the future. Bayliss has quite likely been to India and the West Indies with his regiment—both exotic, tropical places. Here he is at Tasman Peninsula, doing guard duty at Port Arthur or Eaglehawk Neck or the Coal Mines. The work is usually extremely boring. Remember that ordinary soldiers such as Bayliss and Murphy were similar to most convicts in their class origins (working class), and may in some ways have related more closely to convicts than to other free people.

Soldiers may have resented the demands made of them, such as regular drill, guard duty and unquestioning obedience, and must sometimes have wondered whether perhaps they were not just as much prisoners as the convicts. Murphy's resentment of army life expressed itself in misbehaviour; he found solace in painting. Such resentment can lead to argument and perhaps violence. It would be worth exploring possible motives behind Bayliss's shooting of Hall (Profile 4). Was it an act of frustration, not with Hall so much as with the military and penal system Bayliss was bound by? This could be explored and, for more advanced students, later developed through a court-martial hearing, with Booth (Profile 31) officiating.

Serious crimes. The room beneath the Guard Tower offers a setting for exploring prisoners' deepest feelings about their situation: hatred, remorse, frustration, anger, resignation etc. The group could take on a composite role as a prisoner, while Rev. John Manton could be played by a teacher. The occasion could be an interview or discussion involving a condemned man (say Langham, Profile 5; Samuel, Profile 19; Belfield, Profile 25; or Minahan, Profile 29) and Rev. Manton (Profile 20), who made a practice of visiting condemned prisoners. Or one group could take the role of the condemned man, and another, that of the minister.

After discussing the issues raised above, the students could, in role, write a last letter to their families, in which they explore the feelings of a condemned prisoner.

Model Prison



This building did not come into use until the late 1840s. Its design followed that of Pentonville Prison in London, which was based on the idea that prisoners could be reformed if they were separated from each other and forced to labour at given tasks in total silence (see Background 5). Solitary confinement had been used earlier at Port Arthur, but only for punishment. The Model Prison, too, in time became used more for punishment than reform.

Punishment and reform. The cells and corridors of the Model Prison are an excellent setting for examining these ideas. Check Profiles 5 and 24 for an incident in the solitary cells (which should be examined in terms of events leading up to it, or in retrospect—*not* by a re-enactment of the actual act of violence, which will distract students from underlying issues). See also Background 5 and Eyewitness 4 and 5 for further material. You may like to approach an activity from the point of view of a guard rather than a prisoner. Remember that guards, too, were required to maintain silence.

Use the *Model Prison simulation* as an additional resource; this booklet is available from the Port Arthur Education Centre.

Dockyard

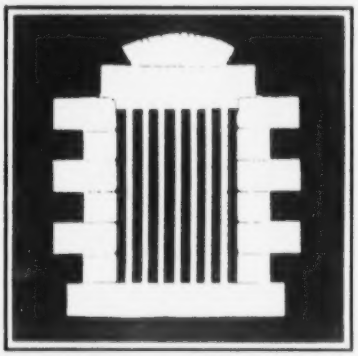
Little remains of what was once one of Van Diemen's Land's major ship-building centres. The depression leading down to the sea was the settlement's largest slipway. The weatherboard building on the far bank was the Shipwright's House, one of the oldest buildings left at Port Arthur. On the site of Dockyard Cottage (the white house) was a blacksmith's shop, and just in front of it was a large shed and sail loft. See Background 7, Eyewitness 1 and Profile 13 for details.

Shipbuilding and timber-getting. Master Shipwright David Hoy (Profile 13) was in charge of shipbuilding (Eyewitness 1) for 11 years. His work was serviced by timber gangs (Eyewitness 11) in the charge of such overseers as Benjamin Stephens (Profile 15). Explore shipyard work, from the bush gangs felling and carrying logs to the saw-pits, to the dockyard where men worked sometimes waist-deep in cold water, fitting out or repairing ships. The convict profiles are useful material. Conflict was a recurring problem in the harsh conditions, both between prisoners and with overseers.

Students in groups could prepare still images that focus on the different kinds of work performed in shipbuilding. The relationship between and attitudes of convicts and overseers should emerge from the still images.

Church

This building, the first large structure at Port Arthur, dominated the settlement's early landscape. Its size and the trouble taken in its construction indicate the emphasis placed by authorities on the role of religion in reforming convicts. The Church, still without windows, had its first use on a wintry Sunday in July 1837—it was 'rather cold', said Thomas Lempriere. Services were exclusively Protestant until 1843, when a Roman Catholic catechist was appointed. When using the Church, remember that it was fully fitted out with an altar, pews and a pulpit, with plastered walls and opaque glass windows.



Students could discuss the people who might have been present at that first service. The teacher could take on the role of a convict, then an official, the students interviewing each in turn to gain impressions of the Church and the first service.

Religion. Examine the career of John Manton (Profile 20). See also comments about Dennis Collins in Profile 26, and read Background 6 and Eyewitness 8. From the picture the students have formed of Manton, think of the kinds of things he might have said to convicts in his weekly sermons, but be careful to avoid the usual caricature of ministers of religion.

In considering the question of religious conflict at Port Arthur, look at Profile 33 of the convict Richard Jones. You should also check out Background 6, Eyewitness 8 and Profile 6. Jones's case is the subject of Example 8 in Section 3 of this book. As an alternative or addition to this kind of activity, students could be asked to prepare still images of a confrontation between Catholic prisoners and their guards, and to ask each person in the still image to prepare a sentence that expresses the character's point of view. Another possibility is an interview with Jones (teacher in role) to give the students a greater appreciation of why he acted as he did.

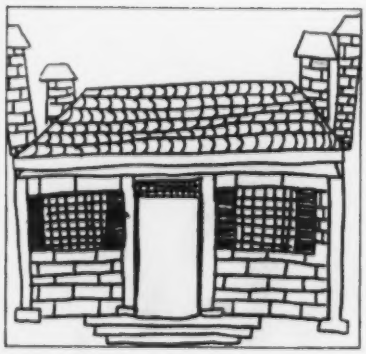
In all activities concerning religion, the teacher must treat the subject with respect (as most people did in the 19th century), and encourage the same attitude in students. Caricature is easy to slip into, but does no justice to personal beliefs or to the importance of organised religion in 19th-century life.

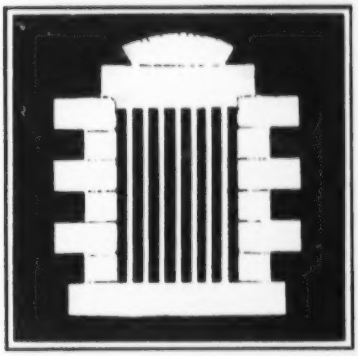
Medical Officer's House and Accountant's House

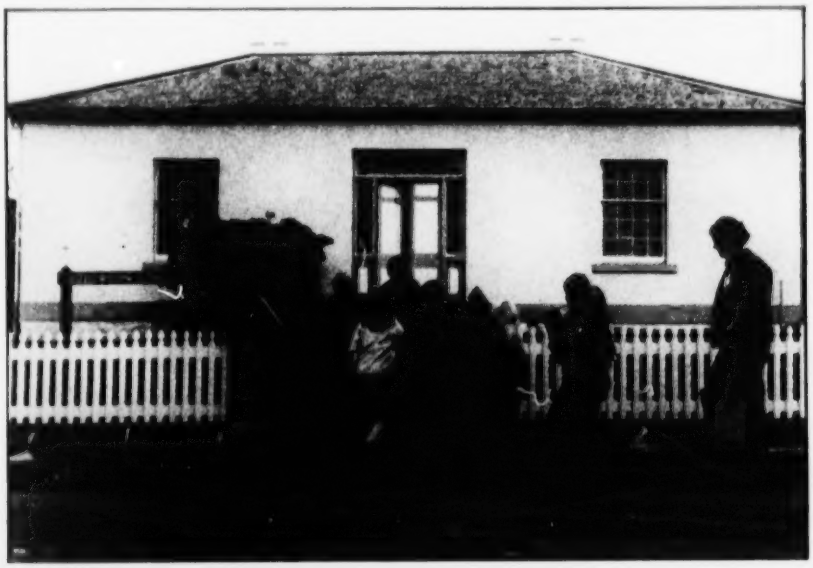
The Medical Officer's House was built in 1848. Its first occupant was Thomas Lempriere (Profile 3) and his wife Charlotte (Profile 23), and it was later lived in by Thomas Brownell (Profile 24). Both the Lemprieres and the Brownells had very large families.

The Accountant's House was built in 1845, and has since been used as a private dwelling; it has also been used as a schoolhouse (but not in convict times). Its outside appearance is that of a convict dwelling, but it has been adapted inside for modern use, mainly as an education centre.

Private lives. You might consider a winter's evening at Port Arthur, say in the late 1830s. The Commandant (Profile 31), perhaps also the Medical Officer (Profile 24) and the Chaplain (Profile 20), have been invited to the Lemprieres' for a birthday dinner. Conversations might turn to any number of things. While it will probably be too difficult a task to reconstruct these conversations, the teacher could select a single problem/issue/incident and have the students (in groups, each with a composite role as one of the people above) present the considered viewpoint of that person on the matter in question. The manner of presentation would take into account the setting, the occasion, the position and personality of the person—and perhaps also the person to whom the opinion is being put.





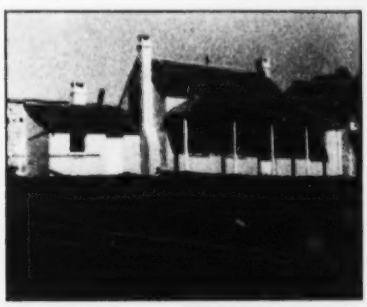


This activity needs to be well informed. The ideas would have to be elaborated in discussion before scenes, or still images, were devised by the students. Students would need to have background information on the chosen topic before they could tackle it in anything more than a cliched or superficial manner.

O'Brien's Cottage

This tiny house may have been a store before it was made into a residence. For three months in 1850 it was the home of William Smith O'Brien, a leader of Ireland's movement for self-government, who was convicted of treason and sent as a convict to Van Diemen's Land. His reputation as a rebel leader and a former parliamentarian caused authorities to set aside a house for him, enclosed by a wall and guarded by a soldier, but having privacy and a small garden.

Political prisoners. The cases of O'Brien (Profile 35) and two other people, Linus Miller (Profile 14) and John Frost (Profile 30), provide clues about the varying treatment and status of political prisoners in Van Diemen's Land. Certainly Miller, an American, had nothing like the special treatment enjoyed by O'Brien; he was scorned by Governor Franklin as a common prisoner. Frost came to Port Arthur not for committing an offence but to act as a clerk in the Commandant's Office. Both he and Miller were also to act as teachers during their terms as convicts.



You may like to use the setting of O'Brien's Cottage to instigate a discussion about what it was that made political prisoners special. How did their education compare with that of other convicts? How might they have reacted to other convicts at the settlement? How did such people as the Chaplain, the Commandant or their military guards look on such people? The students may be able to try an interview with a political prisoner (teacher in role); or about political prisoners with such people as Lempriere or his wife (Profiles 3, 23)—the Lemprieres had Miller as tutor to their children; or a soldier (Profiles 10, 34); or a rough convict like William Derricourt (Profile 11).

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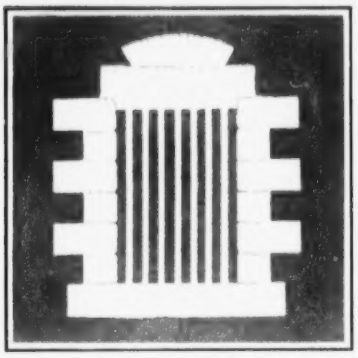

Coal Mines

The Coal Mines at Plunkett Point, a few miles past Saltwater River, were opened in 1833. Convicts thought to be unreformable laboured underground digging coal for the Government. Because of danger from hidden holes (abandoned shafts), school groups must be closely supervised, and the Port Arthur Education Officer (who can also provide additional historical information) should be aware of your movements. The grassy area near the car park and the underground cells are the best spots for activities.

Industry, punishment, escape. Perhaps you could start with Eyewitness 12, discussing the issues raised by the conditions the prisoners worked in, the colony's demand for coal and the Government's need for a 'worst-case' penal station. Questions could include:

- What would you do with the convicts who apparently don't respond to any other kind of discipline anywhere else?
- If you want a mine to be productive and pay its own way, would the forced labour of the 'worst' kind of convict be the answer?
- As a convict who had endured all kinds of punishment, like James Hall (Profile 4) or William Derricourt (Profile 11), how would you feel facing a year or more as a forced labourer in the Mines?

Interviews with a convict (or a convict's wife to whom he has written letters) and a Government administrator may be enlightening.

Try to envisage life in the mine shafts and underground cells. Darkness, heat and confinement are the dominant impressions. The underground cells will give some idea of the dark and confined lives of the prisoners, but remember that the mines themselves were much worse, and were up to 100 metres—not one metre—underground.

Look at the site's natural beauty and the wide coastal views, in contrast to the impressions gained in the mines, and have the students examine questions about the temptations of escape.

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Learning through role-play and story-building

Basic introduction

If you are interested in role-play as a means of teaching and learning, the following teaching resources are available from the Curriculum Resources store (252 Argyle Street, Hobart 7000):

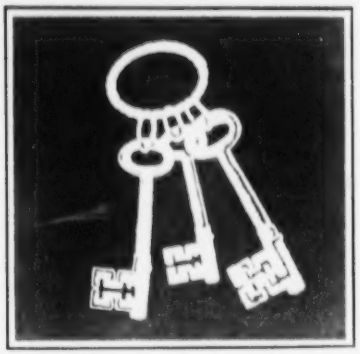
A framework for speech and drama: An introduction and overview, Education Department of Tasmania, Hobart, 1980.

Framework Notes No.1: Drama notes for teachers of upper primary classes, Education Department of Tasmania, Hobart, June 1984.

Framework Notes No.2: Drama notes for teachers of infant and lower primary classes, Education Department of Tasmania, Hobart, August 1984.

Framework Notes No.3: Drama notes for teachers of lower secondary classes, Education Department of Tasmania, Hobart, January 1985.

There is also a video, ***The story in your head***, obtainable through your regional speech and drama adviser. This shows how objects can be used for story-building.



For teachers interested in following up Kieran Egan's ideas, a book called ***Teaching as Storytelling*** is expected to be available in 1986.

Further reading

Approaching Classroom Drama by Rosemary Linnell (Edward Arnold, London, 1982) and ***Drama Structures*** by C. O'Neill and A. Lambert (Hutchinson, London, 1982) contain practical suggestions for using role-play to explore social issues in both the past and the present. An excellent recent Australian handbook is ***Time for Drama: a handbook for secondary teachers*** by R. Burgess and P. Gaudry. (Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1985).

A practical and well-written guide to the value and pitfalls of using drama techniques to teach history is John Fines and Raymond Verrier's ***The Drama of History: an experiment in co-operative teaching*** (New University Education, London, 1974).

Two other worthwhile books are McGregor, Tate and Robinson's ***Learning through Drama*** (Heinemann, London, 1977) and Nixon's ***Drama and the Whole Curriculum*** (Hutchinson, London, 1982).

Port Arthur—basic introduction

The historical material in ***Port Arthur Alive*** has been taken from many sources, published and unpublished. The following list includes only published books. If you wish to consult original records held in the Archives Office in Hobart, you should first look at Peter Eldershaw's ***Guide to the Public Records of Tasmania***, available through the State Library.

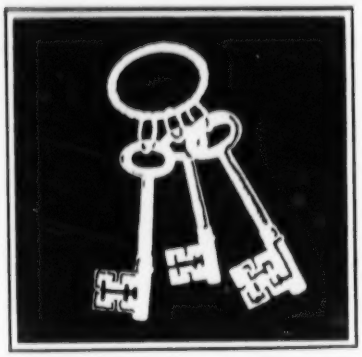
Background and illustrative material

Boardman and Harvey's ***The First Fleet*** (Nelson, Melbourne, 1985) is an imaginative introduction for young children to the history of transportation. Two books by Ian Brand, ***Port Arthur 1830–1877*** and ***Penal Peninsula*** (Jason Publications, Hobart, 1975 & 1978), are well-researched accounts. More detailed background information is available in A.G.L. Shaw's ***Convicts and the Colonies*** (Faber, London, 1966) and Lloyd Robson's ***The Convict Settlers of Australia*** (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1965).

The best illustrated history is Margaret Weidenhofer's ***Port Arthur: a Place of Misery*** (Mary Fisher Bookshop, Launceston, 1984). Other illustrative material is contained in the Education Department's ***Port Arthur Photoprints*** (Education Department, Hobart, 1981), available from Curriculum Resources (252 Argyle Street, Hobart), and Gundars Simsons' collection of ***Convict Documents*** (Tasmanian Museum, Hobart, 1974).

Nineteenth-century accounts

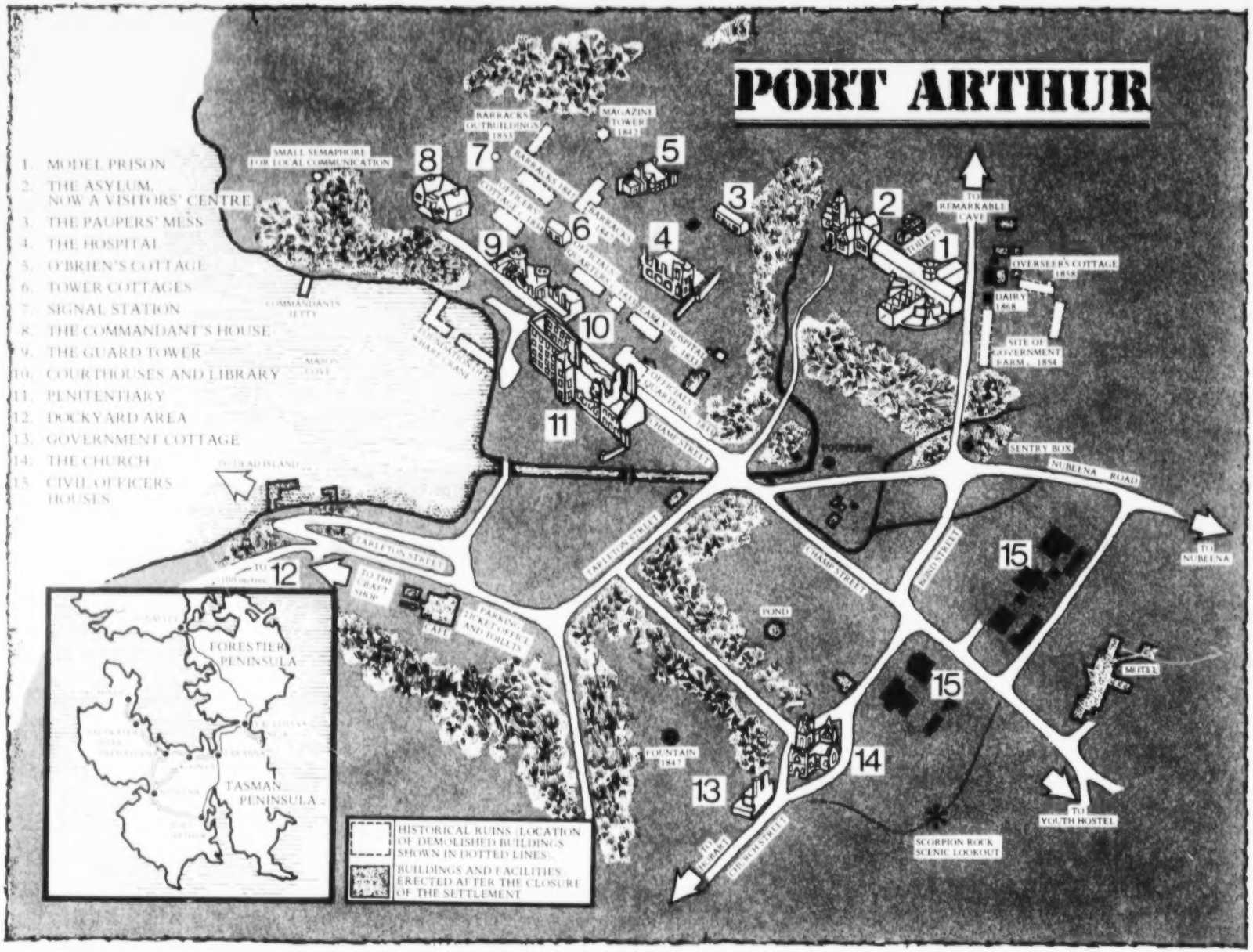
These vary from convict narratives, through officials' and visitors' accounts, to imaginative writing. Of the convict narratives, the best to start with are J.L. Burke's account of ***Martin Cash, the bushranger of Van Diemen's Land*** (J. Walsh, Hobart, 1879), William Derricourt's ***Old Convict Days***, edited by Louis Becke (originally published 1899; facsimile edition Penguin, Ringwood,



1975) and Mark Jeffrey's ***A Burglar's Life*** (first published in 1893; Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1968). Other convict authors included the political prisoners John Frost (***The Horrors of Convict Life***, first published 1856; Sullivans Cove, Hobart, 1973) and Linus Miller (***Notes of an Exile to Van Diemen's Land***, Fredonia, New York, 1846).

The Journal of Charles O'Hara Booth, edited by Dora Heard (Tasmanian Historical Research Association, Hobart, 1981) has fascinating details of official life at Port Arthur. Visitors to Port Arthur who recorded their observations included Henry Fry (***A System of Penal Discipline***, Longman, London, 1850) and David Burn (***An Excursion to Port Arthur in 1842***, first published 1842; facsimile edition Evans, Melbourne, 1972).

The classic story of a convict's life, Marcus Clarke's ***For the Term of His Natural Life*** (first published in book form 1874; many later editions), is still well worth reading, as much for an understanding of the myths that have grown up around convict history as for anything else. It is also a ripping yarn.



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